Efforts to protect crops from weeds and pesticides

2467. DR. (SHRIMATI) NAJMA A. HEPTULLA:
SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that as much as 20 per cent of crops in many areas of the country is destroyed by weeds and pesticides;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the finding of any study conducted on this issue by Government;

(c) the efforts being made to protect the crops from weeds and pesticides;

(d) whether efforts are being made by Government to improve the quality of seeds to ward off weeds and pesticides; and

(e) if so, the extent to which such research has reached and by when the seeds of such nature will be available?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI K.V. THOMAS): (a) It has been estimated that crop losses due to various pests including insect pests, diseases, rodents and weeds range from 10 to 30 per cent annually depending upon the severity of pest attack. Pesticides are not harmful to the crops if applied as per recommended schedule and dosage.

(b) The studies carried out by the Directorate of Weed Science Research (DWSR) and its coordinating centres located in different State Agricultural Universities, indicate that if not managed properly, weeds cause significant losses in crop yield.

(c) In addition to the traditional methods of weed control such as cultural and mechanical, so far 38 herbicides and 8 of their combination products have been approved by the Registration Committee constituted by the Central Government under Section 5 of the Insecticides Act, 1968, for controlling weeds in different crops in the country. State extension functionaries, State Agricultural Universities, Krishi Vigyan Kendras, Central Integrated Pest Management Centres and Directorate of Weed Science Research, Indian Council of Agricultural Research are also educating farmers for adoption of weed control measures in different crops to reduce crop loss due to weeds.

(d) and (e) Government of India has launched a country wide campaign for seed treatment in important crops of the country.

Soil Health card to farmers

2468. SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government had announced some months ago that a soil health card reflecting the health and nutritional status of a farmer's field will be provided to each and every farmer in the country;

(b) if so, the present status of Government's decision;

(c) whether all farmers in the country have since been provided with soil health card; and

(d) if not, by when all farmers in the country are likely to get soil health card?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) and (b) The Government of India has launched a new scheme, namely, "National Project on Management of Soil Health & Fertility" during 2008-09 to promote soil test based balanced and judicious use of fertilizers for improving soil health and its productivity. The scheme *inter alia* envisages setting up of 500 new static soil testing laboratories (STLs) and 250 new mobile STLs in the country during 11th Five Year Plan.

(c) and (d) Based on soil test, soil health cards are issued to the farmers by State Governments. As per reports received, 279.54 lakh soil health cards have been issued to the farmers in the country till March, 2009.

Corruption in DMS

2469. SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA:
PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA:
Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether CBI has recently unearthed a scam in Delhi Milk Scheme(DMS) involving nexus of officials of his Ministry with DMS employees in allotment of milk booths to relatives and diversion of milk meant for supply in NCR, causing losses to exchequer;

(b) if so, the details of the *modus-operandi* of the scam unearthed by CBI;

(c) whether Government proposes to take further action in this regard and fix responsibility; and

(d) if so, the derails thereof and steps likely to be taken to remove corrupt practices prevalent in the DMS?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) to (d) No Sir. However, CBI has informed that it has registered a case No.RC48(A)/2009-ACB-Delhi against the officials of DMS and the case is under investigation by the CBI. Further action will depend on the outcome of the investigation.

Diseases in animals

2470. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA:
SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN:
SHRI ISHWAR SINGH:
Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state: